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A VOICE FROM ITALY:

BEING

NOTICES OF THE EVANGELICAL WORK IN THAT COUNTRY.

No. 83, FEBRUARY 1881.

"Thus God works to-day both in secret individual conversions, and in wide-spread national revivals. Bankruptcies, storms, diseases, wars, are charged to batter down the defences, and then living disciples go in by the breach to convert a kingdom or win a soul. Missionaries seldom begin the work, and providences never complete it. Each kind of instrument is best in its own place and time. Do not go forward without providential openings, lest you should spend your strength for nought; and do not neglect providential openings, lest the lost opportunity should never return."—*Late Rev. William Arnot.*

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QUARTERLY LETTER FROM REV. DR STEWART, LEGHORN.

LEGHORN, 12*th January* 1881.

The only special fact of importance is the appearance with the New Year of a new religious journal, called *L'Italia Evangelica*, in which are merged several denominational journals which were dragging out a precarious existence, not one of them being self-supporting. It is a hopeful sign of a better understanding between the various churches and missionary bodies which are working in Italy. The Rev. Auguste Meille, who has been the editor of the *Famiglia Cristiana* for a number of years, is the editor of the new journal; and under the heading of the news of the churches, a leading member of each of the missions furnishes a report of what is doing in the body with which he is connected, and for which report he alone is responsible. To my thinking it would have been better had these reports been furnished to the editor, in whom the right of supervision and the entire responsibility were vested. It would have given more unity to the paper. If all who contributed to the denominational journals would become subscribers to the new one, it would help towards making it self-supporting; but as the annual subscription amounts to five francs, it is feared that this will be found beyond the means of a large number of the former subscribers. In

England and Scotland there must be many persons sufficiently familiar with Italian to be able to read the *Italia Evangelica* without difficulty, and they could not confer a greater boon upon the *evangelici* of this country than by becoming subscribers to it, so as to enable it to be self-supporting. They would by so doing have also the advantage of obtaining constant information of an authoritative kind as to what is going on in each of the churches. The price for Great Britain, including postage, is only eight francs a year, and that sum sent by post office order to the Rev. James B. Will, Tipographia Claudiana, 33 Via Maffia, Florence, is all that is required to secure accuracy of transmission. The Rev. Professor Comba has also intimated that from the beginning of the present year his magazine, *La Revista Cristiana*, will appear quarterly, instead of monthly as heretofore, the price for Great Britain being reduced to seven francs.

The Italian papers announce that the Pope has written in very strong terms to the archbishops and bishops of his church in Ireland, condemning the illegal steps taken by the Land League for redress of grievances, and warning all the clergy to use their influence against anarchy and bloodshed, and in so far his action is highly commendable. But so far as Italy and its Government are concerned, he has begun to imitate his predecessor, Pio IX., in his threats and growlings. At his State reception of the Cardinals on the 23d December, he complained that he was not permitted to oppose any *effectual remedy* to the many evils from which the faith and the salvation of souls were now suffering. This was with special reference to the Protestant schools opened in Rome, as if by a liberal outlay of the income derived from "Peter's pence" he could not fill as many Papal schools as he pleased! The effectual remedy he sighed for was "the secular arm" which in the olden time effectually put down heresy at a word from the supreme Pontiff. He further complained "that the Pope was not even at liberty to manifest his lawful sorrow" at such a state of things, though all the while he knew that his allocution would be published in every journal throughout Italy.

The maintenance of the royal *exequatur* on all Papal Bulls before they can be published was another cause of complaint. There are now four bills before the Italian Parliament against which he then proceeded to fulminate his excommunication as "contrary to the rights and doctrines of the Church." The first relates to divorce, the second "to the ecclesiastical patrimony,"

the management of which it is proposed to take out of priestly hands; the third is "the introduction of laymen into the administration of the Church contrary to its divine institution;" the fourth, to use the Pope's words, "aims at excluding any ecclesiastical participation in the management of the *Opere pie*" (hospitals, asylums, refuges, &c.). The following sentence from one of the newspapers will readily explain the excommunication of the latter project of law:—"The inquiry ordered by Government regarding the *Opere pie* has produced the following results:—They have a patrimony of sixteen hundred and twenty-six millions of lire Italiane, which yield an annual interest of ninety millions! Do you know how much of this is employed in the works of beneficence which are the special scope of the *Opere pie?* Only forty-seven millions; and the other forty-three millions? We wait till Pope Leo consults S. Tommaso for his answer." In the circumstances, the wrath of the Pope and the interference of Government are perfectly intelligible.

Through the appeal I made in my letter to you in November 1879, many donations were sent in aid of the poor scholars at Pomaret, and I think the donors will be interested in reading the following extract from a letter received three days ago from the Rev. Dr Lantaret, in which he gives an account of the school this year, and of the parishes in the Val S. Martino, from which the scholars come:—"It is attended by twenty-eight scholars—viz., ten of the third year, eleven of the second, and seven of the first year. Though the entrance examination was not very severe, we were able only to admit the half of those who presented themselves. This is exceptional, and I have no doubt the average of admissions will continue to be ten, and the average of general attendance thirty scholars. As to the parishes from which they come, they are distributed as follows:—Prali, 3; Rodoret, 2; Massel, 2; Périer-Maneille, 4; Ville Sèche, 1; Pomaret, 8; St Germain, 3; Pramol, 1; Prarustin, 1; Milan, 2. The two latter are brothers, children of members of the Waldensian Church in Milan, the father being a German, and the mother an English or a Scotch woman. I observe that I have forgotten to include in the above table a scholar from our colony of Rosario (South America). There is another in the college at La Tour, and I have confidence in the goodness of God that that fraction of our Church will one day accomplish in La Plata the mission which the mother Church is accomplishing

in Italy. Twenty-four out of the twenty-eight scholars eagerly and thankfully avail themselves of the three good meals weekly which the kindness of friends permits me to offer them. Until now the general health of the scholars has been excellent, and their assiduity in their studies leaves nothing to be desired."

The Edinburgh bazaar in aid of the fund for raising the stipends of the pastors in the Waldensian valleys from £60 per annum to £100 has caused great joy, as the amount realised gives ground to hope that the fund may soon be completed. I have often in your pages had opportunity to express my warm sympathy with this effort. But there are one or two of the parishes so large, and with populations so scattered, that I have long desired to see them divided, and placed under the care of two pastors instead of one. Angrogna is one of these parishes. It has two churches within its bounds (one at Pra del Torno, where the ancient Barbes had their college), and £2000 is all that is wanted to provide a modest stipend for a second minister. There is an excellent schoolmaster evangelist there at present, but he cannot attend to his school and to the wants of the people at the same time. I have seen magnificent gifts of larger amount than this given by individuals for churches at home ;—perhaps the Lord may put it into the heart of some one who has the means to do this good work for an over-populated mountain parish.

Allow me to acknowledge with sincere thanks two bursaries from Mrs Handyside, The Cottage, Blairlogie, and one from Mrs Mure Macredie, of Perceton, of £30 each for Waldensian theological students in Florence ; £5 from the Misses Carnegy, Laverockbank House, Edinburgh, for dinners to the poor scholars at Pomaret ; £20 from the Glasgow Ladies' Continental Society for two bursaries at Leghorn ; £25 from Mr Fisk, Clifton, Bristol, for Angrogna and other missionary work among the Waldenses ; three hundred francs from Mrs Cuppy, Naples, for the same ; and £1, 13s. from Mr Meade, London, for part bursary at Normal School, Pisa. ROBERT W. STEWART.

LETTERS.

(*Written in English.*)

GENOA, 12*th January* 1881.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—Two or three years ago, you were so good as to send me a very kind letter of invitation to corres-

pond for the *Voice from Italy*, and I feel a little ashamed of myself for having never sent you a scrap. But, better late than never, as you say in English, specially when there is a good reason for it; and now late, but I hope not too late, I come to ask you to be so good as to grant me a little space in the next number of the *Voice* for a short etter upon the work of evangelisation, which is carried on in Genoa through the instrumentality of the Waldensian Church.

Our meetings in *via Assarotti* are well attended on Sunday, either in the morning or in the evening. A series of polemical and apologetical *conferenze*, given last year, have drawn many people to our church, and several of them attended the services afterwards, and then, this year, asked to be enrolled as catechumens. Perhaps some of your readers do not approve of polemical and apologetical *conferenze* (lectures, as you say), and prefer to see ministers preaching the Gospel without allusions to the Church of Rome; but in Italy these lectures are the best way to gather large audiences, and when some of the people, who find their way to our church in that way, continue after to attend the services where the Gospel is preached without allusions to the Church of Rome, I think we cannot despise such means to make our countrymen acquainted with the eternal truths. On these occasions I saw several times over 250 people listening attentively for more than one hour and a-half.

The number of the catechumens on the roll, that is to say those who follow the religious instruction in order to be received in the church is, this year, *thirty-three: thirteen* sons and daughters of members of our church, and *twenty* come out from the Roman Catholic Church. One of these last ones died lately in our Protestant Hospital. I assisted him till the very last moment, as he died only a few minutes after I left the room, and I am glad to say he was quite prepared to meet his Saviour. He always told me —" My hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ only," and asked me to pray to God for him. I did so, and then he said—" Now, I want nothing else." I tell you this as an instance of the seriousness of our catechumens come out from the Roman Catholic Church.

Two years ago I had the visit of a sailor. He asked me at once to be received in the church. As I am so much accustomed to see people asking me to be received in the church for money, I looked at him astonished, and I was just going to send him away. But I noticed in his face something which I never

noticed in others who came for money; I must say, something more serious. So, instead of sending him away, I asked him to sit down, and I explained to him that I could not receive him at once, that it was necessary to be prepared, and go through a regular instruction in the doctrines of the Bible. But he said —"I am a sailor, I cannot stop in Genoa but a few weeks." "Well," said I, "I can do one thing, I give you a letter of introduction to the colporteur of the 'Bethel,' who is a member of my church." So he made acquaintance with the colporteur, who was very pleased with him. But the things turned out well for the sailor. He had to stop in Genoa seven or eight months, he attended regularly the services, and then was received as a member.

Lately he went out for a voyage, and when he came back with a cargo of wheat of a bad kind, his captain asked him to sign a paper stating that they had bad weather and the wheat suffered during the journey, and so the captain could not be responsible for the cargo. But he said—"My captain, I am a Christian, I belong to the Evangelical Church, and I never tell lies. We had very good weather, and I cannot say we had bad weather." The captain, offended, said—"You will have to do with me." That meant that he would give him less money than he promised before. In fact he gave him two or three per cent. less. But our brother said to me—"It is true I have some pence less in my pocket, but my conscience is clear before God."

As that very same sailor signed many papers like the one he refused to do now, we have in that fact a proof of the good influence of the Gospel upon those who sincerely receive it. It is not necessary to say how glad I was to hear of it.

Now my letter is long enough. Still, allow me to say to the readers of the *Voice* that the day before yesterday we opened a new *locale* for the preaching of the Gospel. It is in a very central situation, only a few steps from the Cathedral, and no doubt Archbishop Magnasco will be very glad to see the *Evangelici* drawing so near the Cathedral. We have already there a day school and a Sunday school with twenty-five children on the roll, and at the opening meeting the room was quite full of people. The one hundred chairs were all fully occupied, and over fifty people were standing near the door.—I remain, dear Sir and Brother, yours sincerely,

B. Revel.

(*Written in French.*)

5 Via del Caravita,
Rome, 12*th January* 1881.

Honoured Sir and Brother,—Until now I have never written to the *Voice from Italy*, without having been expressly invited to recount to your readers some interesting event which has occurred in my field of labour. To-day, however, I take the liberty of sending this letter to the *Voice* in order to relate to you a story which is at once sad and encouraging. But I shall leave all reflections on it to the reader.

On the 1st of September 1872, L. P. and his wife, M., after having given proofs of their faith and of their attachment to the gospel, were admitted into our Church. They had a little daughter of about six years of age. L. P. was a poor shoemaker, in delicate health, and unable to maintain his family by his work. Happily for him, his wife was waiting-maid to a princess, whom she had served for many years, ever since they had both been children. The little P. family lived rent free in a pleasant garret of one of the most beautiful palaces in Rome, and appeared to be very happy there. But scarcely had they publicly embraced the Gospel, when everything was changed for them. The princess threatened to dismiss these poor people from her house if they did not return to Popery. A brother of L. P., priest of the *Basilique de S. Pierre*, joined with the prince and princess in endeavouring to overcome their resistance. They tried hard to make them transgress the commandments of God. One Sunday morning, at the hour for service, the prince sent a pair of shoes to L. P., commanding him to attend to them at once; but he, showing the servant the ten commandments which were hung upon the wall of the garret, said to him, "I will send his Excellency's shoes to-morrow, but this is the day of rest, which we must keep holy—I am now going to the worship of God with my family." The servant in vain threatened him with the anger of the prince, who would have to wait till the shoes should be mended next day.

The little girl, though delicate in health, was meanwhile developing, intellectually and spiritually, in a most encouraging manner. To free her from the persecution, of which she was on the part of the princess, and her uncle, particularly the object, her parents wished to place her in a school for girls, where she

might in time be able to take her certificate as schoolmistress. But they had not the means necessary for doing so, and I have vainly endeavoured to procure them for them from some friends. In the meantime the young T. had to submit to all the caprices of the princess, to pass her day in reading worthless novels to her, to accompany her to the theatre, and even to church. By force, by promises, by giving her some small presents, and by assuring her that her parents should know nothing about it, they prevailed with her to kneel before a priest, and make to him some semblance of confession.

Suddenly, last summer, during the absence of her mistress she fell ill of typhus fever, and was at the point of death. Her conscience awoke. She confessed her fault to her mother, and showed a lively repentance. In vain did the princess write letters to her waiting-maid threatening to dismiss her and all her family from her house, unless she sent for a priest for her sick daughter. "I had rather," replied the poor mother, "that the Lord should take her from me than that I should see her return to the Romish Church." Teresina, on her part, said to the servants of the princess, who wished to bring a confessor to her, "Do not by any means do so. I will see no one but the pastors of my church."

The typhus infection seized L. P., who had in his turn to take to bed. Then the princess, taking advantage of the distress of the poor family, pressed them more than ever to return into the Romish church, unless they wished to be immediately turned out of the house. "I will send," said poor M. P. to her unfeeling mistress, "my husband and my daughter to the hospital, and I will go if necessary and beg my bread. but we will never deny our Saviour."

She then really sent her husband to the hospital of *S. Spirito*, where he died after some days. The unhappy mother had to conceal her grief from her child, for fear that the unexpected news of the death of her beloved father might kill her.

After these events the princess returned from the country. Since then I have been absolutely forbidden to visit the poor invalid. I feared that her mistress might succeed in again forcing a confessor on her, but Teresina resisted. "I have had so much remorse," she said, "for having once confessed to a priest that I will never do it again. I am determined to suffer anything rather than again deny the gospel."

Teresina was discharged from her service.

The princess hesitated about sending away her mother also, because she knew better about the household than she did herself, and she could only do without her with great inconvenience.

In any case the position of Teresina is insupportable. She lives still in the house with her mother, but the princess will have nothing more to do with her, and I should be happy if any benefactor would come to my aid and would realise for her her most ardent wish, by furnishing the means for her studying in the Normal School in order to become a schoolmistress.

I have heard lately that her uncle, who has been made *Monsignore* by the Pope, promises her his fortune if she will again become a Roman Catholic, but I hope that He, who has given her so much firmness in resisting the promises and threats of her mistress, will give her the necessary strength to resist the blandishments and promises of her uncle.

Accept I beg of you, honoured Sir and brother, my respectful salutations, and believe me, your very devoted

J. RIBETTI.

(*Written in Italian.*)

MILAN, 12*th January* 1881.
12 VIA MILAZZO.

DEAR SIR,—Having been invited by the President of our Mission Board to send you some details of the evangelical work in this town, I respond the more willingly that the Lord has lately given us cause for gratitude and pure joy. For three years past we have had a service in the suburb of Porta Garibaldi for the families of the working classes connected with our church, who, wearied with their week's work, find it difficult to walk so far as to the centre of the town, where our church is situated. We began with meetings, singing of hymns, Bible readings, a very little controversy, and so, little by little, under the mighty and fatherly guidance of our God, a small church was formed which has added twenty-eight members, fourteen of whom have just been admitted at Christmas 1880. Thus our church, which, during the last six months, had lost several good members by death after long months of suffering,

not only has had its numbers made up, but increased, and now counts 200 communicants. The reception of these fourteen ex-Roman Catholics by the church was a beautiful Christian festival. With great simplicity, openness, and true joy, they replied to the questions which my dear colleague, Signor G. D. Turino, put to them publicly on the chief points of the evangelical faith. All, even outsiders, were moved ; and more than one said—"Happy is he who thus firmly believes." As, I think, I observed on a former occasion, the evangelical weapons must be directed in Milan, not so much against true Roman Catholicism as against false liberalism and scepticism. Indifference to anything that savours of religion, of piety, of the study of God's Word, is great, joined to profound ignorance, and pride in any one who propounds new moral and social doctrines in which religion has no part. Even in so-called cultivated society, you find yourself in a very labyrinth of contradictory opinions, false with regard to the Gospel, to Jesus Christ, to revelation ; contradictions which are given out with the utmost solemnity as the result of science. It is the pastor's work and duty to fight against these in conversation, in the pulpit, in religious publications. If he cannot do so, he is set aside as a foolish man ; and Romish priests, as well as priests of the new science, falsely so called, laugh at him and ridicule the Gospel. What profanation ! And yet—and my heart is sad while writing this—the hap-hazard, ignorant, and sometimes false assertions of certain evangelical ministers who have never studied, and, perhaps, never do study because they have never, either in College or Theological Academy, been taught the indispensable rules of right study ; the assertions of such men, I repeat with bitterness of heart, disgrace the evangelical ministry in Italy ; all the errors of those who ought never to have entered it, without strict examination being attached to it. The Waldensian pastorate is respected where it is known, but the people who "tie up all kinds of grass in the same bundle" (Italian proverb) do not distinguish.

But let these unfortunately too true stories be let alone, and let us rather rejoice in the thought that in the course of a few months the beautiful church of S. Giovanni, in Conca, will be opened by the Waldensian Church for worship in Milan. It is a very old Catholic Basilica, dating from the ninth century, and after many restorations and many vandalisms, it has now been restored to its original elegant simplicity, and will soon open its

door to the good Ambrosians. God grant that in it, under those ancient and sonorous arches, we may be enabled to make them understand the pure and Holy Gospel of Jesus which made St Ambrose happy, a saint too much forgotten in Milan, while the persecuting and sanguinary S. Carlo Borromeo, wrongly praised by interested biographers, is brought more into notice. The church, with its ancient façade of Lombard architecture of the twelfth century, adorns one of the most spacious streets of the city and faces a wide and commodious square. It is capable of containing 600 persons, and, with God's blessing, zealously and lovingly sowing the divine seed, we shall see it filled.

The various services are all well attended. On Christmas Day, on account of the crowd, we had three Communion services, and all were well attended, to the great satisfaction of the pastors.

The Christmas Tree flared its bright lights in the eyes of more than 100 children, and grown up people shared in the pleasure of the little ones. It is good to see how the very name of Jesus brings joy.

These, dear Sir, are a few short details hastily put together for the *Voice*.

Accept, together with them, the most respectful Christian salutations of,—Yours faithfully in the Lord,

PAOLO LONGO, Waldensian Pastor.

(*Written in English.*)

GENOA, 12*th January* 1881.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—During the short visit I paid to Dublin in 1869, a clergyman engaged in mission work amongst Roman Catholics was telling me some of his experiences. One of them struck me very much. More than once converts from Popery had gone back to their superstitions on their death-bed. I studied the point in our own mission-field, specially during the last ten years that I have been at the head of our mission, and consequently in position to know what happens in every church and station. Well, I can declare, that, to my knowledge, not a single recantation took place among the hundreds of our church

members who have left this for a better world. On the contrary, and here comes the feature I was speaking of, people not belonging to our churches, still Roman Catholics, have asked the visits of our agents during their illness. Three facts have happened within the last two months, one in Piedmont, the second in Florence, the third in a Roman province, the ancient Sabina.

In the first instance, it was a man of fifty years of age, member of the town council of *Chiaverano*, a man of some property and greatly esteemed by everybody. Though he had come sometimes to our meetings, he was still a Roman Catholic when he fell ill. The illness lasted several months; at last all hope of recovery had to be given up. Then the man sent for our pastor, Mr Revel (a nephew of the late doctor). The whole family was opposed to the step, but the patient enjoyed the use of all his senses, and his family did not dare to contradict him. Day after day, week after week, Mr Revel visited him, read to him, prayed with him, each time being more struck by the growth in grace of the dying man. Some days before his death he spoke about a very delicate question, which Mr Revel had not ventured to touch. Who was to preside at the funeral service? the priests or the evangelical pastor? As the man had not separated himself from the Roman Catholic Church, if he had not declared his will, his corpse belonged to the priests. The wife and the son had reckoned upon this. Great was their dismay when their husband and father intimated that he wanted to be buried according to the Protestant rite, the ceremony being presided over by the pastor. She remonstrated with him, implored him not to throw such a disgrace upon the whole family. Remonstrance and prayers were of no avail. The poor bigoted wife, in her bewilderment, ran to Mr Revel and begged him to convince her husband that it was quite sufficient to die an evangelical man, and that, for the sake of his family, he ought to permit to be buried as a Roman Catholic! You may imagine what was the pastor's answer! Many friends visited the dying man, and were much struck by the calmness, peace, even joy which were so evident on their friend's face, and which they had never beheld on any man on his dying bed. The angel of the Lord came for the redeemed soul, and the corpse was buried according to the Protestant rite. A great crowd filled the house and the courtyard, and listened with great attention to the divine service. Then a procession was formed. Thirty evangelical men preceded, and

seven or eight hundred people followed. As many as 600 assembled in the cemetery, and again listened with the greatest attention and evident interest to the proclamation of the grand and consoling truths of the sure hope there is in Jesus, the resurrection and the life. Poor Roman Catholics ! they belong to the Christian family, but they are like orphans fallen into the hands of a bad tutor, who squanders their property, appropriates it to himself, and gives them some rare fragments. It was a great event for the borough. Many a prejudice against Protestantism has fallen, and many a calumny was reduced to naught. And that on account of a man whose name never appeared on any of our catalogues, but is surely written in the book of life.

In the second case, it was a young man (c'est celui dont Mr Tron vous a parlé dans sa lettre du 7th current).

The third case presented some extraordinary thing, being the case of a woman, she, her husband, and two daughters being all Roman Catholics. They all agreed upon calling the evangelist, Signor Giovanni S., to visit the sick mother. Sig. S. spent the whole hours of night with the woman, when he saw that the last hour was fast approaching. In the morning, about seven o'clock, seeing that the patient was asleep, he went home for some business, leaving the guard alone with the patient, whose relatives had gone to the "*forno*," to prepare the bread for the sale of the day. The guard, a bigoted Roman Catholic, made use of the time, ran for the priest, and had her patient communicated, anointed, and all the rest in less than an hour. When the evangelist returned he found the priest lord and master of the place, triumphant for having retaken possession of his sheep in good time. He bade the evangelist go his way, etc., etc. Signor S. would not be dismissed in such a peremptory manner, he marched to the bed and asked the dying woman if she would like to have a prayer offered for her. The already dim eye had a last flash, the cold hand gave still a little pressure to the hand of Signor S. The prayer was offered, and with the *amen* the soul took its departure. The priest, witness of the scene, remained, however, in the house ; he had anointed, against her will, the body of the deceased, and he was determined to have it. Presently the husband and daughters came in, and were told what had occurred. The hot Italian blood boiled over, and one of the daughters said to the priest : "Who has given thee leave to come and poison our

mother?" The younger daughter did not speak, but flew at the face of the priest, who escaped with the marks on his face. Please, remember that the girls are *Roman Catholics* and not evangelicals. We teach our people a somewhat better education.

What do these facts tell us? This, I think; that besides the registered work that appears in our statistical tables, there is an influence exercised by our congregations. This influence begins to be felt more and more. Men, young men, women, still Roman Catholics, begin to have more respect for, more confidence in, evangelical pastors than in Roman priests. This is a great point not to be lost sight of when one tries to appreciate what has been done by the missionaries in Italy. Look at the churches constituted, look at the stations opened, well and good; but don't forget that surrounding these still small circles of evangelical Christians, there are the hundreds, there are the thousands, who hear us or hear of us, and in whom a slow work is going on, as the three facts just narrated indicate very clearly. Are we not justified then in believing, with hearts full of gratitude, that the Lord is with us, owning our feeble, imperfect efforts, and making them efficient through His Holy Spirit? Believing, as we do believe, that no man can convert another man—that the Holy Spirit alone can give the new birth—we rejoice at such facts, because they give unto us the gladdening assurance that the Lord who has begun, who continues, will also complete the work in this long priest-ridden land of ours.—Ever yours fraternally,

MATTEO PROCHET.

(*Written in Italian.*)

GENOA, *7th January* 1881.

Honoured Sir,—Although direct information from Tuscany is seldom wanting in the *Voice*, allow me to offer you to-day some which has been received lately, and written on the banks of the Arno, regarding the work carried on in the Church of the *Oratorio* at Florence, of which the pastor is Professor P. Geymonat. From his assistant, Sig. M. E. Malan, we have the following:—

The Lord has called to himself (last autumn) two members of our church,—a woman, whose acquaintance I had scarcely made

(Sig. M. had only then come to Florence), and a young man of twenty-one, whom I visited repeatedly. "He died the death of the righteous," writes Sig. M. "In the midst of his great sufferings he exhorted his parents to patience, sustained their courage, and consoled them. In his delirium he often exclaimed, "Who has saved you? Jesus Christ." On asking him once, after a short service held in his room, if he felt truly at peace with God—if in his trials he felt Jesus was with him—he quietly replied, "I feel him *always* beside me." In his last moments he begged his mother to read the twenty-third psalm to him—a psalm which I had read to him some days previously—and asked the whole family to join him in prayer to God, and to thank Him.

The great distress prevalent this year in Florence, and especially in the Church of the Oratorio, seems to have produced good fruit; souls are more open to receive the gospel, and the attendance on worship more regular—nearly all the members attending regularly, and many Catholics. The meetings in private families gather together from twelve to fifteen persons, and are not lacking in encouragement. With so many opportunities for sowing the seed and watering it, God will surely give the increase.

One fact—outside the church altogether, proving how God desires that his seed should grow and fructify—I shall relate. It rejoiced the hearts of the pastors of the Church of the Oratorio, as it may well rejoice the hearts of all who love the souls of men and desire their salvation.

At 75 Via dei Fossi lived a young man, seriously ill of consumption, who had lived far away from God and blasphemed his holy name. An old friend of the family had, however, sometimes taken this young man of twenty-four to the evangelical meetings. On the evening of the 29th November he expressed to an intimate friend of his the wish to be visited by some one who could give him comfort. "However," said he, "I will have nothing to do with priests; send me rather a *Protestant priest*." The friend applied to a father whose children are at Dr Comandi's school, saying, "You who know the evangelicals, could you take in hand to find me one of their ministers?" It was half-past ten, and as that father was a Roman Catholic he did not know where to get a Protestant minister, but he was acquainted with a deacon of the Church of the Oratorio, and went to him. The deacon lost no time in visiting the sick man,

who said to him, "I have been an atheist and have blasphemed God's name." "What you tell me," said the deacon, "rejoices me, because I perceive that in acknowledging yourself a sinner you have made the first step towards God." And thereupon proclaimed to him pardon and salvation through Jesus Christ. The young man, much moved, like St Paul after his conversion, prayed to God, saying, "Lord have mercy upon me; Lord forgive me!" at the same time embracing him who had brought him the most precious of all treasures.

The next day Sig. Geymonat, the pastor, went to see him. He spoke to him of the prodigal son, and of the thief on the cross. "You are an angel sent to me by God . . . . when I am able I shall openly make *the change* (*i.e.*, to leave the Church of Rome, and make profession of the evangelical faith). "The thing is done," said the pastor; "you were a sinner, an enemy of God; and now, if you believe, you are with God, who pardons you, and gives you eternal life." "Yes, I believe, I believe . . ." And that same night the Lord called him to Himself. He was interred in the Protestant cemetery, followed to his last earthly resting-place by his father, who had been blind for fourteen years, his mother-in-law, his friends, and many evangelicals. We are grateful to God, who gave Sig. Geymonat this opportunity of proclaiming the Gospel to many who live without God in the world.

Accept the cordial salutations of yours truly,

A. B. Tron.

EXTRACTED FROM *Il Movimento* OF GENOA, of Date 13th January 1881.

On Sunday evening, at 7.30 o'clock, a new Hall was opened in Via Chiabrera, No. 3 (for Conferences). The indefatigable friend, Prof. Matteo Prochet, President of the Waldensian Committee, gave the opening address on the subject "True Liberty." The eloquence with which the theme was unfolded is indescribable; sufficient to say that it left nothing to be desired on the part of the numerous audience who for an hour

and a half listened in rapt attention. Indeed, had the meeting lasted longer, the hearers would not have been weary of listening.

There were about 200 persons present, among whom ladies and gentlemen of high position in our town, and several of our civic authorities. I believe that even Magnasco (Archbishop) had he taken it into his head to attend, would have been fully satisfied! However, if he likes he can still have an opportunity of going, for the meetings will continue three times a week—Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays—at 7.30 p.m.

We are happy at last to see that our Genoese are daily freeing themselves from the clutches of superstition, and are recognising that they are free citizens of a free Italy.

The hall is extremely nice and well lighted. Any one might enter it, of whatever rank.

When the meeting was over, satisfaction was visible in all.

On coming out I took a look round and saw the following inscriptions over each door:—First and second classes, third and fourth classes, advanced class, director's room. I then perceived it was not merely a hall for conferences, but for different branches of work. I asked a fair-haired gentleman what this institution was intended for? And he answered that it was a free school for the people, which had been held for the last eighteen months in Piazza Serriglio, but was now removed to this more commodious building. A new committee had been formed, and a new programme would soon be published.

Well done, say we from the heart, to the members of this committee, who take so much trouble on behalf of the education of our fellow-citizens.

EXTRACT from a LETTER to the Rev. MATTEO PROCHET from the Rev. E. PASCALE, of Como.

24th November 1880.

"I must now tell you about my visit to Chiavenna and Bette. I longed for the opportunity of complying with the request of your secretary, and indirectly, of Mrs F., to go to see the evangelical family of Bette, and thus, on the 15th inst., I set out towards Colico, whence, by diligence, I reached Chiavenna at

11.30 at night, and being tired, retired to rest, leaving for the morrow my visit to our brother. Bette is a small but picturesque village, with a few hundred inhabitants, situated at the entrance of a long, narrow valley, about twenty minutes from Chiavenna, and on the Splugen road. It is here that Mr and Mrs F. stopped on their return from the Engadine last summer in order to visit their old friend, Daniel Crottogini, whom they had known in Edinburgh. It was Daniel that I too was seeking. I soon found him, and my heart warmed as I imagine the heart of the weary traveller must warm on reaching the welcome oasis in the sultry desert, when I discovered that the family then before me was a Christian family.

How true it is that the Lord's ways are not as our ways! The Crottogini family had gone to Edinburgh in the hope of saving enough money to return to their own country in course of time, and there living comfortably as well-to-do peasant proprietors. While in Edinburgh they attended the Italian meetings, and there the whole family—father, mother, and adopted son—embraced the Gospel. After some years of hard work and strict economy they managed to save about £200, and with this little fortune they started homewards. Alas! On their journey to Italy, in passing through Paris, they were robbed of the whole sum! *That* treasure, amassed with such care, was gone, but *one* remained to them, the Pearl of great price, and it accompanied them to Bette. They were rich in faith and looked to the Lord for their daily wants, and as Daniel assured me, *He has* provided for them. Since their return to their native village they have worshipped the Lord in their own house, and have not once entered a Roman Catholic Church. Although at first they were molested, now they are respected and beloved.

After resting a few minutes, Daniel asked me to accompany him to the Crotto—or cave where he keeps his wine—a place from which a beautiful view is enjoyed, overlooking, as it does, the extensive vineyards which surround Bette. It is their custom to have luncheon in their Crotto, or near it; so, to oblige them, I ate a morsel of bread and washed it down with a little wine. Although it did not seem to me a place exactly suited for an evangelical minister to speak about Christ, I yet found (and for the first time) that it is quite possible even in a "Crotto" to have serious conversation about the Gospel and Jesus Christ. We were soon joined by Daniel's brother, who, although ignorant

of the Gospel, was nevertheless well disposed to listen to its message. He is one of those who go to church to give a good example to his children, but who do not believe in all the teaching of the Roman Catholics.

In the evening we had a meeting of about fifteen or twenty persons, mostly relations of Daniel. I was well impressed by their attention, and I now know that they are souls who feel the need of a personal religion, and will henceforth love the Gospel. May God bless the impressions received! I trust to be able by-and-bye to have a meeting place at Chiavenna. I read at our meeting the 15th of John, and briefly commented on it, ending by repeating the Lord's Prayer, which Daniel's brother found most beautiful, never having heard it in Italian. It was late when we separated, and all, I trust, felt the good of what had been said. It was raining hard, but three of the friends insisted on accompanying me to the inn. I should have liked to have remained another day at Chiavenna to have had other opportunities of examining the ground and seeing what were the hopes, humanly speaking, of sowing the good seed, but the weather was bad and I was required at Como. Before leaving, Daniel promised to seek out a room at Chiavenna and endeavour to collect a larger audience, when I would be again invited to pay them another visit and preside at their meeting. He believes there are many in Chiavenna well inclined to the Gospel. . . . Believe me, &c., Yours truly in Jesus Christ,

E. PASCALE.

NAPLES, 10*th January* 1881.

DEAR SIR,—I will gladly give your kind readers our latest news, but having a lot of work to get through to-day, I fear that my ideas will be rather disjointed, and that my letter will shew signs of haste. It is not very long since Christmas, and Christmas trees are still in season. We had three trees this year, two for the schools and one for the poor. The first for the schools, under the management of our mutual friend, the Rev. Mr Gray, was given at Capella Vecchia, and on the following evening, the children belonging to the two other schools met round a second

tree. It was agreed that the entertainment for the two hundred and fifty school children should be given at seven o'clock in the evening instead of in the afternoon, as formerly, in order that as many as possible of the parents might be present. Our wishes on this point were amply fulfilled; the parents assembled in great numbers, and the two hours that were spent round the tree in reciting, singing, addresses, and prayer, passed much too quickly. The audience was most attentive, and I need hardly say that the occasion was made use of by the directors and masters in their addresses, and even by the children in their songs, to invite all present to give their hearts to the Saviour.

As the tree had not been quite stripped, we resolved, by renewing the candles, to give an entertainment to the poor. I had written to the Town-council in the same way as last year, for the names and addresses of some of the poorest people in the town, to each of whom we had intended giving a kilo of bread. My letter, this time, was not favoured with an answer, but, I believe, it caused quite a sensation. In less than no time, a hundred poor Roman Catholics were collected, and thousands would have come if we could have entertained them all. I was anxious to address a few words to those poor people who have so few opportunities of hearing anything of the kind, and I took as my text, "to the poor the Gospel is preached." Many were moved to tears by the singing, the prayers, and the preaching, and were filled with gratitude for all that they had seen, and heard, and received. I will spare you an account of their exclamations, but I must mention the remark made by one old man to his neighbour: "Now," he said, "I can really believe that Jesus Christ came to save even me."

I have been giving lectures lately on Sunday evening, in the Scotch Church, on the following subjects: The Virgin Mary as a *virgin*, a *wife*, a *mother*, and a *mediator*. Those lectures were well attended and followed with great interest. They were prepared and delivered in such a way as not to offend even the most conscientious Roman Catholic, and at the same time, to enlighten and instruct the infidel as well as the Christian. The Virgin Mary occupies an important place in the minds and hearts of Roman Catholics; they worship her far more than the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me give you an instance of this:—In the beginning of last month, while travelling on foot in the pro-

vince of Laterno, I had occasion to ask my way from an old woman on the road, "How can I know the way," was her answer, "I have never been there, go with the Virgin." "Thank you," I said, "but I am accustomed to travel with Jesus Christ, it is He who accompanies me wherever I go." "I know nothing about Jesus Christ," she replied, "I advise you to follow the Madonna." Does this not show what great need there is of making the Son known to those poor ignorant people by obeying the command of the mother: "whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

The wife of one of our members, and a student who has since joined the army, came to the Lord's table for the first time on the Sunday after Christmas, and there are eight others preparing for admission at Easter.

A young man who holds the appointment of secretary to the Town-Council joined our service yesterday. He was studying in a Roman Catholic seminary when the political agitation of 1870 broke out; he took part in the agitation, and it was during that time, strange to say, that he was led to a knowledge of the truth. He has suffered much from the opposition of his family, but, thank God, his faith has withstood all persecutions. May God bless him, and grant that he may be faithful in that part of the country where he will now be placed. We hope to see him from time to time in visiting our stations in that part of the province.

I must say farewell, and wish you all a happy New Year.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,

JEAN PONS.

BAZAAR FOR THE WALDENSIAN PASTORS' AID FUND.

DECEMBER, 18TH TO 20TH, 1880.

THE result of this bazaar has already been sufficiently announced to the public, yet our readers not resident in Edinburgh may be glad to have a few additional details on the subject. Many

people throughout the country were, at this time last year, endeavouring to rouse the public mind to an interest in the Pastors' Aid Fund. A large portion of the £12,000 aimed at had already been collected, and the scheme would seem to have arrived at that point where want of faith, or want of patience, or both combined, render the idea of a bazaar a welcome and a hopeful means of rolling away the stone which would otherwise exhaust too much time, and too much strength in the process. To pave the way, therefore, circulars were extensively distributed over the country, in which the public were told of the pittance on which the twenty-two pastors of the valleys are forced at present to live, about £60 a year. The remark has been heard from one of these men, whose quiver was fuller than his purse, "nous avons plus d'appétit que d'argent;" and it appears to us a marvellous achievement to support a family on such a scanty income. Nevertheless, there are persons who find fault with our efforts, and call it misplaced charity. This, they say, is the duty of their own flocks. So it is, we reply, and they know it, too; and not only that, but they do what they can. For every £20 which we engage to add to the income of a poor pastor, the Waldenses have bound themselves to raise another £20, so that each pastor may have a clear income of £100 a year. Truly we might agree with those charitable objectors to our scheme, if we thought it fitting that a pastor should live and bring up a family on such straitened means. But we venture to think the Waldenses are needful for Italy; we do not wish them to die out, we do not wish them to remain uneducated, nor to have that noble ardour checked, which prompts them now, and has prompted them long, to fight the battle of their God on Popish fields. In helping the pastors, we are helping Italy; in ministering to their needs, we strengthen the Gospel army there; and, in doing this, do we not hasten the coming of the day of Christ?

And, after all, we owe the Waldensians a large sum of money. That £16,000 which was collected for them under Cromwell was appropriated by our restored king, and has never been returned. What need, then, to say any more on the subject? Our debt must be paid.

The friends of the Waldenses were very successful in rousing the public mind, and they kept up their efforts to the very last. By a special *coup*, a lively interest was awakened at the last mo-

ment. Signor W. Meille, a Waldensian pastor, though not in the valleys, a few days before the bazaar, delivered two lectures, one on the history of the Waldenses, the other on their manners and customs. During the first lecture, he exhibited a number of relics from the valleys, brought over to be sold at the bazaar. One sword after another, all used at the "Glorieuse Rentrée," or captured from the enemy; here, again, a Bible of 1580, well worn, and reluctantly parted with, we doubt not; another Bible still older, a volume of manuscript sermons; all full of the memories dearest to the Waldensian heart. And these were given up, and to be sold here! Why? The reason is touching. We were helping them, and they could not look on idly, and send nothing to the bazaar themselves. So as these were all they had, they sent them; with tears and heart-rendings it is true, but how could they do otherwise? Would we value these things as they did? They remembered the Covenanters, and knew we kept relics of their struggles. They would wish us to place these relics beside the others, and they knew we would keep them safely. For themselves, they had no means of preserving these things in the valleys,—and so they trusted us. We have tried to prove worthy of the trust.

The Lord Provost, at the opening of the Bazaar on the 18th December, spoke of these relics, and suggested that they should be bought by one hundred contributions of £1 each. That would represent their value, and he himself began the list. Some hours before the close of the Bazaar, the sum was completed, the relics were bought, and are now about to be restored to the Valleys, and to be placed in a museum there. During the bazaar, they occupied a table in the centre of the hall, and were constantly surrounded by a crowd.

The bazaar was preceded by a concert, given on the evening of the 17th. The fair vendors had been busy all afternoon decorating their stalls. Flowers filled the orchestra, lovely articles from many lands surrounded the hall, and the concert programme was fully equal to the occasion. Next day, all was bustle and excitement. Arches and festoons being absent from the stalls, all the objects for sale were clearly visible, even at a slight distance. The names of distinguished leaders and pastors of the Waldenses were painted on blue shields, and placed conspicuously round the walls. The motto "Lux lucet in tenebris,"

with the Waldensian device of a burning candle surrounded by seven stars, adorned the front of the gallery, and also, in miniature, the left shoulder of each stall-holder. Quite bewildering was the variety of articles on the stalls. Almost every quarter of the globe was represented. At least two of the fair vendors had visited Italy on purpose to make selections in person. One stall had the prettiest display of alabaster objects; quite reminding us of the shops in Florence. Another had paintings of the most classic spots in Italy, with jewellery and objects of *vertú*, also from that country. The Waldensian stall was rendered very attractive by the costumes worn by the fair vendors. These costumes had come from the Valleys, and consisted of a dress, apron, and large frilled cap. Very simple and unpretending they looked. Books and work from the Valleys, also chocolate manufactured there, cheese, and fruit; all these were besieged by crowds during the whole time of the bazaar. An attractive table in the centre of the hall was adorned by sketches and paintings from the hands of such masters as Sir Noel Paton, Herdman, Hay, Barclay, &c.; and the public did not fail to discover and carry off many of these gems of art. A descriptive catalogue in verse was sold in the hall, to which the following lines form the introduction:—

"We trust that purchasers from near and far
With eager haste will troop to our Bazaar;
For sure no Scotsman, in his proper senses,
Will close his purse against the poor Waldenses.
We love our land, we love our mountain air,
For truth and virtue have their dwelling there;
Then let our hearts leap forth across the seas,
And dwell where Nature never fails to please.
There, too, the mountain summits seek the sky,
And seem to point to life which cannot die;
There duty's mountain path is early trod,
And man, as nature, speaks the thoughts of God.
Let Scotland, then, with joy send forth her gold
To help the pastors of this mountain fold—
These loving, holy hearts, whose only aim
It is to honour their Redeemer's name,
To tend their flock with self-forgetting care,
And lead the young to duty, love, and prayer.

Then let both hearts and purses burst with zeal,
For sympathy should give as well as feel.
Has One not said—and do we not believe ?—
'Tis better far to give than to receive ? "

We heard a Scotch minister remark the other day, that he had never before been at a bazaar, where the faces of all appeared so friendly. And truly, it seemed hard, not to spend money, but to refrain from spending it.

At the close of the first day, the sum realised was £1020, and at the conclusion of the bazaar on the evening of the 20th December, it was found that, along with the concert, it had cleared £2340. We hear that more contributions are expected from America, as well as from England, where a fund is being raised by Episcopalians. Of the £12,000 aimed at, upwards of £9000 have now been raised.

J. M.

Wabrender Park Road, Edinburgh.

BOBBIO CHURCH.

To the Editor of the "Voice," from Italy.

The ruined state of this ancient building, associated with the stirring history of "La Glorieuse Rentrée," was brought under the notice of your readers in the *Voice* of last November, page 26, in an interesting letter written by a stranger visiting the Vaudois Valleys. It is therefore with satisfaction I send an account of the restoration and re-opening of the church, in the words of Pastor Guardiol of Bobbio, and should any who read this feel disposed to help these poor mountaineers "to pay the bill," contributions in stamps or otherwise will be gladly forwarded through me. Address—Miss Nisbet, 10 Victoria Square, Clifton, Bristol.

Pastor Guardiol writes :—"The opening of our 'Temple' took place on Sunday, the 14th of November, in the midst of snow, and a continuance of the bad weather, which had retarded its completion. Since commencing the work, we have found a great

deal more requiring to be done to the church than was at first anticipated. The façade has had to be entirely restored, and three large windows have been opened. We have enclosed by means of an iron railing an open space in front to prevent the entrance of animals. So now our 'Temple' is substantial, comfortable, and almost elegant. The expenses, however, have far exceeded our first estimate, and we find ourselves with a deficit of 1000 francs (£40). The parish has paid 2065 francs (£83), and I am continually urging the people to contribute more. On the day of the opening we had a communion service at which 500 persons were present. I had never before seen so large a number at the Lord's Table, and my heart was greatly rejoiced. In my opening discourse, I expressed to the people an earnest hope that, with the change in the edifice, there might be also a corresponding change of heart among them, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that in the future, even more than in the past, it might be a place of edification where many souls, bowed down by the sense of sin, might find joy and peace in believing. We are very weak, and greatly in need of direction and exhortation from those who are fighting the same good fight of faith. I was much edified by the example of that venerable lady who shows so great an interest in our church, and whom we shall surely meet in the Temple above, that "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and of which God Himself is the architect.

BERTOLLA.

A REMARKABLE religious movement has taken place in Bertolla, a small town a few miles out of Turin, which has created considerable sensation, has been taken notice of in some of the leading Italian papers, and has been even thought worthy of a cartoon in the *Fischietto*, the *Punch* of Italy. To quote the words of the *Gazzetta del Popolo* of Turin, the movement consists in "the turning to Protestantism, in the course of a single week, of a population of about 2000 persons;" and its cause, the avarice, jealousies, rivalries, and oppression of the priests. The result of continued dissensions among themselves was that the church of

Bertolla was closed and the people were left without any religious service whatever. In such circumstances what did they do? They had heard that the gospel was faithfully preached by the evangelical pastors, and so they turned to them. On the 7th of January last, a deputation was sent to the Rev. Wm. Meille of Turin, with a petition signed by sixty-three heads of families, praying him to have pity on them, and to minister to their spiritual wants. The letter was evidently the genuine product of a felt need and no artifice, and Mr Meille's many friends in this country will enter into his joy on receiving it, and understand the readiness with which he complied. He and Signor Mustone (known to many in Edinburgh, from his sojourn here last winter) visited the Bertollesi at once, and arranged for a service on the following Sunday, the 11th. No hall being found large enough to contain the many who flocked to hear the pure Word preached, "at two o'clock on Sunday," says the *Gazzetto del Popolo*, "the Waldensian pastors preached in the square of Bertolla, and were listened to with earnest attention and great satisfaction by all." There were about 600 present. The number would have been larger, but that many, the day being very fine, were employed in bleaching and laying out linen, for Bertolla is nothing less than the laundry of Turin, where all its washing operations are carried on. Thus the cartoon, in the *Fischietto*, represents two laundry establishments, one on either side of the river Po; ever the one is written "Lavanderia Valdese," and over the other "Lavanderia Cattolica." At the door of the latter a monkey, dressed in priest's robes, is showing his teeth, opening out his claws, and throwing down a protest against the large flock of sheep entering the Waldensian laundry, while a ram and sheep dog (Sig. Meille and Sig. Mustore) defy the monkey priest. The action of the Bertollesi is extolled by the caricaturist in these words, "Benissimo pecorelle di Bertolla!" Well done, little sheep of Bertolla.

The two Waldensian pastors were warmly invited to return, and preparations are set on foot for a continuance of the services. We trust, in the next number of the *Voice*, to have more to say of this little flock; meantime, will not its readers remember these seeking souls in their prayers, and ask that the Good Shepherd may Himself lead them and draw them into His fold?

FLORENCE.

The following article, from the pen of a lady belonging to Edinburgh, is the description of an entertainment which was given at Palazzuolo, in the church of Professor P. Geymonat. Thanks to your help, kind contributors, fifty children, poor for the most part, but regular, attentive, and diligent, have had their little treat. May the thought that you have pleased some *of these little ones* be sweet to your hearts. You have had pleasure in giving, they in receiving. F. Rostan.

Edinburgh, *Jan.* 19, 1881.

"We were present last night at an interesting and animated scene in the Waldensian Church in the Palazzuolo, Florence. In honour of the Children's Yearly Festival, the little church was decked out with all the beauty which artistic skill and loving sympathy combined could suggest for the gratification of the little ones. In the centre stood a beautiful Christmas tree, brilliant with countless tapers, and with such glittering and bright-coloured articles as Christmas trees are wont to bear. On three sides of the square, where stood the Christmas tree, were rows of seats. On the one side were the children and the teachers; opposite them their sympathetic parents and friends; while the third was occupied by interested spectators of a higher class. What greatly struck our fancy was the graceful and artistic adornment of the walls. Accustomed to our more massive English decorations in holly and ivy, we were much delighted with the novel effect and fairy-like lightness of the wreaths, festoons, and other indescribable devices, wrought out with wild asparagus. And, every here and there, the monotony of the green was relieved by a flash of bright colour from some floating drapery, or from some gay wreath and festoon of bright-coloured paper. Having feasted our eyes sufficiently on all these external preparations for the festival, we were next called on to enjoy pleasures of another kind, consisting in poetical recitations and amusing dialogues, interspersed with frequent musical treats in the form of part songs, or rather hymns, executed by the children and their teachers. The Italian children have a marvellous aptitude for recitation, the effect of which is not marred by any undue self-consciousness or shyness. It would seem as if the

love and talent for acting were inherent in their nature. But, as all the world over, the old proverb holds true that there is no rule without its exception, so in this case one item in the programme was unrealised, owing to the sudden shyness of the little expected performer (aged five and a-half), which no entreaties or encouragement could help him to overcome. Half-way in the proceedings an interlude occurred, when Signor Geymonat came forward to give a short and simple address to the children, whose interested attention was secured by means of occasional questions. The subject he selected was the three-fold duty of knowing, loving, and following the Lord Jesus, the reward of such service being the promised inheritance of eternal life and unending communion with Him hereafter in a brighter world. The recitations concluded, there followed what must have been to many a little heart the most interesting part of the programme—the distribution of the presents. These consisted chiefly in useful articles of clothing, provided by the motherly care and forethought of Madame Geymonat, supplemented by others, perhaps still more acceptable to the little recipients, such as fruit, cakes, sweetmeats, &c. The proceedings, which had commenced with prayer, were now appropriately closed with a "benediction," sung by six of the teachers.

FLORENCE, *January 7th*, 1881.

NOTES FOR THE QUARTER.

LAST week, Bertolla, a village in Piedmont, of about two thousand inhabitants, saw the unusual spectacle of a Protestant pastor preaching the Gospel in its principal square. For some reason of which we are ignorant, the Archbishop of Turin, a short time ago, ordered the parish church of that town to be closed. The inhabitants began to consider whether it would not be possible to obtain religious instruction elsewhere, and on Epiphany the leading inhabitants drew up a petition asking the Waldensian pastors of Turin to come and explain to them the Word of God. On Sunday, the 12th, the Rev. Mr Meille went and preached in the open-air to a large and attentive audience.*

* This most interesting occurrence is referred to elsewhere.

The men who were actively engaged in the formation of the kingdom of Italy, are becoming now a very small band. During this quarter, Italy has had to mourn the loss of two of these, Baron Ricasoli and Sig. Mauro Macchi. The latter was one of the leading men amongst the party that is now in power, and held also a high place amongst Italian free-thinkers. The former belonged to the conservative school, and was noted for his upright principles and the depth of his religious feelings. By many he was regarded as almost a Protestant. This was not the case. He continued to the last a member of the Roman Catholic Church, although he had a strong sympathy for many of the evangelical doctrines. The *Semaine Religeuse* of Geneva says, that during a visit which he paid to that city about 1850, he had much intercourse with many of the leading men of the evangelical party, studied the writings of Vinet, and regularly attended the lectures of Prof. Cellérier on the Epistles of St. Paul. The same journal says, that some years afterwards, when he was passing through Switzerland, he called on his old friend, Mons. Eynard, and said, "I have only a few minutes to stay with you, we have not time to talk, but let us pray together." These facts render very probable the statement which has often been made, that the "iron baron" often gathered his dependents together in *his old castle of Brolio*, and read the Scriptures with them.

An effort has just been made to start a journal that will more adequately represent the different evangelical churches in Italy, and with the commencement of this year, the Italian Evangelical Publication Society began the publication of the *Italia Evangelica*. This paper is edited by the Rev. Augustus Meille, with a committee of directors, composed of gentlemen connected with different denominations. In addition to the news of all the churches in Italy, this journal will give articles of edification, Sunday school lessons, articles of apologetics and controversy, explanations of difficult passages of Scripture, narratives, &c. The first three numbers contain articles by Prof. Comba, Prof. Revel, Sig. Teofilo Gay, Dr Lanna, &c.

BAZAAR FOR THE EVANGELICAL SCHOOLS AT FLORENCE.

Mrs Ford, 17 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh, has undertaken to send a box for this bazaar about the end of February, and will gladly receive and acknowledge contributions, which should reach her house on or before the 26th.

NEW YORK COMMITTEE.

Contributions for the Home Mission Fund of the Waldensian Church will be received by the Treasurer of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 33 Centre Street, New York City.